

STARK COUNTY ENGINEER

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Stark County Engineer's office Proposes Replacement of the Rockhill Avenue Bridge over the Berlin Lake

The Stark County Engineer's office proposes replacement of the existing Rockhill Avenue Bridge spanning the Berlin Lake in Lexington Township, along with required approach roadway improvements.

Use of federal funds subjects the proposed undertaking to the requirements of Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966. This federal law protects publicly owned parks, recreation areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges and public or privately-owned historical resources. Due to the scope of the proposed undertaking and the presence of Section 4(f) controlled properties, measures to minimize harm have been developed that creates a *de minimis* impact (as defined in 23 CFR 774.17) on the Berlin Lake (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Pittsburgh District and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife) and the Mahoning Valley Trail (Stark County Park District). Applying a *de minimis* determination allows for all possible planning to minimize harm by reducing the impacts on the Section 4(f) controlled properties. A *de minimis* impact is one that will not adversely affect the features, attributes, or activities qualifying the Section 4(f) controlled properties for protection. Anticipated impacts to these properties will be minor and temporary, and they will be restored to a condition at least as good as or better than existing prior to construction activities. During bridge construction, boating access to the Berlin Lake area east of the bridge will be limited through most phases of construction for safety reasons. Construction is expected to take between 6-7 months, during which time Rockhill Ave. will be closed at the bridge and traffic re-routed via a designated detour route. This road closure will also necessitate the closure of the Mahoning Valley Trail which is a multi-purpose, on-road trail through the project limits.

The proposed improvement includes all possible planning to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) properties. The primary functions and components of the properties will not be substantially impaired by the proposed improvement. There will be no anticipated permanent adverse physical impacts or permanent interference with the planned activities or use of the recreation facilities within the properties. The proposed scope of work and the magnitude of changes to the Section 4(f) properties are minimal and the assessment of impacts and proposed mitigation, in regards to maintaining access and safety, are considered to be reasonable and acceptable. Impacts have been further mitigated through a commitment to provide additional bridge width for the Mahoning Valley Trail.

This \$1,200,000 project is expected to begin in the Spring of 2016. Questions and/or comments regarding the project may be submitted by October 31, 2014. For further information or to submit formal comments please contact Scott Basinger, P.E., Stark County Bridge Engineer at 330-477-6781.